

NEWS FROM SCDCA

South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs



Brandolyn Thomas Pinkston, Administrator

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SCDCA Media Contact: Public Information and Education Division

1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC)

803.734.4200(direct number)

Email: scdca@dca.state.sc.us

LOTTERY/COUNTERFEIT CHECK SCAM TARGETS SC CONSUMERS

Most consumers are already wary of prize offer cons, phony lottery scams, and counterfeit checks. However, the department has been receiving complaints about a new scam that combines the two – a bogus check from a fake lottery.

Consumers have received notification of “lottery winnings” or “prize money” via mail. The letters claim that the recipient has won thousands of dollars, and that the enclosed check is a portion of the payment, a loan against the entire payment amount, or even a check for payment of taxes. The victim is instructed to deposit or cash the check and send or wire the funds to the “company”, after which he or she will receive the entire payment or further instructions about how to receive all of the money. Often the victim is asked to provide an account number for direct depositing of the funds.

Of course this is a scam, and after the victim wires or sends the cash after depositing the check, the bank discovers that the checks are bogus and therefore holds the victim liable for the counterfeit check. The “winnings” are never deposited, and they may find their bank account plundered by the “lottery company” personnel. Consumers are reminded that not only are international lotteries unable to be played in the United States, but that legitimate lotteries and prize offers never require up-front payment to receive winnings. Consumers should also beware of “winnings” from sweepstakes that they never entered, or checks from unfamiliar companies or persons.

For more information about lottery scams, counterfeit check cons, and other consumer issues, contact the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs at (803) 734.4200 or 1.800.922.1594 (toll free in SC). Information can also be found on our website at www.scconsumer.gov.

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About the South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs:

Established by the Consumer Protection code in 1974, The South Carolina Department of Consumer Affairs represents the interests of South Carolina Consumers.

Our mission is to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, mediation, enforcement and education.

For more information, visit www.scconsumer.gov.
